DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 352 127 PS 020 878

AUTHOR Arzoumanian, Linda Lee
TITLE Improving the Skills and Confidence of Early Childhood Public School Teachers in Their Use of Observation Techniques.
PUB DATE 92
NOTE 93p.; Ed.D. Practicum, Nova University.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Practicum Papers (043)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Check Lists; *Classroom Observation Techniques; *Elementary School Teachers; Inservice Teacher Education; *Observation; Primary Education; Questionnaires; Skill Development; *Student Evaluation
IDENTIFIERS *Anecdotal Records; *Event Sampling

ABSTRACT

This practicum report describes an intervention to increase teachers' skill and confidence in the use of classroom observation techniques in a school serving children from kindergarten through second grade. Goals of the intervention were that teachers would: (1) recognize six types of observation; (2) implement two types of observation in their classroom; (3) implement at least one change in their classroom based on the results of their observations; and (4) increase their confidence in making observations. The intervention consisted of five inservice training sessions at which six observation techniques were studied. The techniques were checklists, event samples, anecdotal records, running records, time samples, and informal interviews. During the course of the intervention, teachers practiced the use of checklists, event samples, and anecdotal records. The results of pre- and postintervention questionnaires indicated that teachers recognized each of the six types of classroom observation technique; reported that they would make one or more changes in their classroom as a result of their observations; and reported that they felt prepared for, comfortable with, and confident in their use of checklists, anecdotal records, and event samples. A 33-item reference list is provided. Appendices include copies of the questionnaire and surveys for teachers, lesson plans for the five inservice sessions, and materials for teachers' use during the intervention. (BC)

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Improving the Skills and Confidence of Early Childhood Public School Teachers in Their Use of Observation Techniques

By

Linda Lee Arzounanian

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A Practicm I Report presented to the
Ed. D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood
in partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA UNIVERSITY

1992

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described

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This practicum report was submitted by Linda Arzoumanian under the direction of the advisor listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

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Date of Final Approval of Report

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ABSTRACT

Improving the Skills and Confidence of Early Childhood Public School Teachers in Their Use of Observation Techniques. Arzoumanian, Linda, L., 1992: Practicum Report, NOVA UNIVERSITY, Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood. In-service/Training/Early/Elementary/Teacher Education/Observations/Observation Techniques/Anecdotal Record/Event Sample/Checklist/Skills/Confidence

This practicum was designed to enhance the skills and confidence in the use of observation techniques by early childhood teachers in a public school setting. Workshops providing in-service training were designed and implemented at an elementary school.

The writer developed and implemented a series of workshops utilizing pre/post questionnaires, lesson plans, and evaluation instruments. The pre/post questionnaire, observation survey and reflections tool was administered to all participants.

Analysis of the data revealed that the participants were able to identify six observation techniques and over the series of in-services increased their confidence in the use of informal observations. The teachers reported a gain in confidence from their first experience with a technique when they had an additional opportunity to experience, record, and reflect on a particular technique more than once.

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9/5/92 Linda Lee Arzoumanian

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Community

The schools in this urban setting are spread over two hundred square miles. The schools serve a very economically and ethnically diverse population. Elementary schools may have populations where a few students are on free and reduced price lunches while other schools serve both breakfast and lunch free of charge for all of the students. A single full day kindergarten class in one area of town may have African-American, Hispanic, Laotian, and Anglo children. Fifteen miles away another school has only half-day kindergarten classes with a student body from affluent homes and of only one ethnic background. In another area of town, a school next to an Indian Reservation serves primarily Native American children as well as the local neighborhood children. With over eighty dialects and languages being spoken in over one hundred schools, the term to define this setting is diverse.

For ten years the school district has been complying with a federal court-ordered plan for desegregation.

There are several magnet schools with transportation support from one side of town to the other. These schools offer special programs in drama, science, mathematics, technology, literacy, as well as education for gifted children.

Individually, the schools offer a variety of programs and classrooms. Most of the elementary schools have grades kindergarten through sixth grade. Some of the schools, however, may have kindergarten to second grade, or kindergarten through third grade. There are schools with preschool programs on site and schools with programs for day care and early childhood special education programs. There are alternative schools for children at the middle school level as well as the high school level. The school system has a program for the teenage parents of infants.

A wide variety of funding sources exists for the schools: Chapter I funds, desegregation funds, foundation grants, gifts, donations, as well as the regular tax base. The school district has not been allowed to raise its tax base though for the past several years and is currently operating on very limited funding.

The schools operate under a consensus agreement between the electorally appointed Governing Board of five citizens chosen at large and a teachers' union. The

State Board of Education oversees the whole process with a very light hand except when it comes to assessment and graduation requirements. Until recently the State Department of Education used the Iowa Test for Basic Skills as the means of recording and evaluating student achievement throughout the state. The State Department of Education has begun to consider other forms of assessment as measures of student progress. Currently, the entire process of assessment of student achievement in primary and secondary education is in transition.

Writer's Role and Responsibilities

In this community, the role of the writer is that of a consultant in early childhood education. It involves working with certified teachers, teaching assistants, resource teachers and administrative staff in the early childhood component of Chapter I programs and in specially funded programs in kindergarten through third grade. The focus of the writer's role is staff development, program planning, and support for the early childhood programs. It is the writer's responsibility to share the prevailing philosophy of developmentally appropriate practice, curriculum and assessment with the teaching staff (Bredekamp, 1987) of a new school. The

writer has a shared responsibility for providing information and resources regarding the rationale for developing a variety of assessment methods in early childhood education with primary teachers (Chittendon, 1991; Perrone, 1990). In the past year and a half, the writer's role has been to assist in the selection and the development of new forms of assessment for the early childhood programs. Additionally, it has been the role of the writer to support teachers and teaching assistants as they attempt to implement portfolio based assessment.

The specific location of the project was a new school designated to serve children, kindergarten through second grade. The school has several special programs, a preschool handicapped program serving children from three years to five years of age, and a full day kindergarten program receiving special grant funding. It is a Chapter I school-wide project. In order for a school to be a school-wide project, seventy-five percent of the children must be at the poverty level, receiving free or reduced price lunches. The school-wide project under federal guidelines must determine the educational needs of the children, plan how to meet those needs, demonstrate performance gains and describe how the funds will be spent. The plan must include the parents, teachers, and other instructional staff at the school.

This school had an instructional staff of approximately thirty-two teaching staff including certified teachers, resource teachers, and teaching assistants. As an instructor for a community college, the writer is currently teaching child development courses to the teaching assistants at the school. The writer is involved in the periodic observation of full day kindergarten classes as a part of the assessment process for the program funded by a state grant.

Chapter II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

The problem was that teachers had not been trained to observe and record the behavior of children as a form of assessment. Assessment procedures were being implemented that required teachers to do observations, record the observations and share those recordings with other educators and parents.

At the beginning of the 1991-1992 school year, the State Department of Education determined that the Iowa Test of Basic Skills would not to be used as a test of student achievement in the primary grades. Previously, the test had been given in April of each year. The scores had been given to the parents on the last day of the school year. Often a comparison of scores from school to school or from district to district appeared in the newspaper in July. Real estate agents seemed to use those scores more than anyone else as they presented properties to new clients. Parents at times chose to move from one location to another so that their children could have a better education. They felt higher

test scores meant a better education was available at the school with the higher cumulative scores. The results of the tests were seldom used to plan or adjust curriculum for the students.

The early childhood component of Chapter I and the full day kindergarten program instituted a new portfolio based assessment with the observation of behavior as one of the tools for evaluation. The new form of assessment required the teaching staff to observe and record the behavior of children and to be able to share those recordings with others. The teaching staff indicated that they were unfamiliar with observation techniques. The teachers indicated that they did not have experience with a variety of observations techniques. In order to do a thoughtful job of observing and recording behavior, the teachers needed training in skill development.

Training in the use of observations as a form of assessment except for very specific courses had been non-existent. A review of course offerings of the local university, community college, and private universities indicated training in observation skills was unavailable. In discussion with curriculum leaders and the staff trainers it was noted that observation skill training had not been available in the local school district. A single module of one undergraduate credit in the

techniques of observations was available to the teaching assistant staff as part of the child development training from a community college. This program had been in existence for less than two years. It was available to about fourteen new students a semester.

In summary, early childhood teachers in this community had not been trained to do classroom observations of the behavior of children. Since assessment measures had been chosen that required teachers to observe and record the behavior of young children, teachers needed to be able to identify and use observation techniques. Teachers were not confident in their selection and use of observation techniques appropriate to their classroom setting, thus presenting a problem in carrying out the new assessments.

Problem Documentation

The problem was documented by (a) teacher selection of training options, (b) requests by principals and teachers, (c) verification of need by an education program evaluator, and (d) a questionnaire. This documentation was gathered over a period of six months.

Additional funding is provided in this state for early childhood education. This special funding is for

kindergarten through third grade. In this school district it is referred to as K-3 programs. In the spring of the 1991-1992 school year, K-3 programs provided a menu of options that allowed schools to select materials, training, or support for the faculty, staff, and parents of children in kindergarten through third grade. The staff at the schools made the choices and submitted the requests to the K-3 programs, and those requests were tabulated. A new menu choice was titled Kid Watching/Observation Skills. Forty-two teachers from fifteen sites signed up to take the pilot course. The course was designed to be three sessions of two hours each to support the teachers in the early childhood portfolio assessment. It began to prepare teachers for another new form of assessment in the primary grades called CORE Competencies.

In January of the 1990-1991 school year, two teachers and one principal asked for assistance in observing and recording the behavior and activities of students and staff during the school day. In two instances they wanted the writer to look for developmentally appropriate practices during the class day. The third request came because a teacher felt that too much of her time and the time of the teaching assistant was focused on the negative behavior of three

children. (Teaching assistants are non-certified paraprofessionals working in the classroom under the supervision of certified teachers.) They were concerned about what might be happening with the seventeen other children they had in the class. They felt as though they were spending an inordinate amount of time trying to monitor and regulate the behavior of three children. The teacher and the teaching assistant did not have experience in observation skills.

A discussion in the summer of 1991 with an evaluator of the Chapter I early childhood program verified that a large number of certified staff were unaware of how to record anecdotal observations. The indication was that a few years ago the staff had been asked to write narratives. The quality of the narratives implied a need for skill development of observation and recording techniques in the early childhood program.

During the summer prior to the beginning of the 1991-1992 school year, two in-services were held to introduce the portfolio based assessment to Chapter I staff. As part of the in-service, the participants were asked to respond to a questionnaire (see Appendix A). They were to indicate whether they felt a need for training to increase their level of expertise in observations skills. Sixteen of the nineteen teachers

and resource teachers checked that they would like more training. Seventeen of the eighteen participants of the second in-service indicated a need for more training in the techniques of doing observations. No training was offered at that time through any type of staff development for developing or increasing skills in observations.

Sixteen prekindergarten, kindergarten and first grade teachers enrolled in the Kid Watching/Observation Skills pilot class were asked if they would like more training in observation skills. Fifteen of the sixteen responded that they would like additional training. Nine teachers of second and third grade were asked the same question. Eight teachers responded that they would like more training.

The participants in these two classes were asked if they had experience with the techniques of anecdotal records, time samples, event samples, checklist and informal interviews. Nine indicated that they had no experience with any of those observation techniques, two teachers had experience with one technique, eight teachers had experience with two techniques, four teachers had experience with three techniques, two teachers had experience with four techniques, and one person had experience with five of the techniques.

During this pilot class on developing observation skills in the fall of 1991, the teachers discussed their concern that not only did they not know how to observe, but they did not know what to observe, when to observe, or how to implement program changes based on their observations.

Causative Analysis

It was the writer's belief that there were three reasons for this problem. Elementary degrees leading to certification in teaching had neglected to focus on child development. At a local university, child development is not a focus of attention. Courses in child development may be found in course work relating to counseling or home economics. Currently, in order for a person to be certified in early childhood special education, they must have had child development courses. These courses were most often given on a graduate school level, but they are not a requirement for the elementary education degrees or certification.

Observation skills require guidance and support not currently available through staff development for early childhood teachers. The writer had been asked recently to consider arranging a series of classes to assist

teachers in developing their skills in anecdotal observations and narrative writing in relationship to the new assessment measure, the Early Childhood Excellence model. This Early Childhood Excellence model is one component of the portfolio assessment for Chapter I. The principals requested the teachers share five narratives as a sample of student assessment.

Leaving a system of standardized testing and beginning a system of assessment based on teacher observation skills is difficult. The situation was made more difficult because many of the teachers did not have formalized training or staff development in the techniques that would enable them to feel confident in their recordings and assessments.

Relationship of the Problem to Literature

Demands on teachers increase as information about learning and educational trends ebb and flow around the once sacrosanct classroom (Almay & Genishi, 1979; Peck, McCaig, & Sapp, 1988). Pressure increases brought on by federal and local issues of accountability, mainstreaming of children with a variety of handicapping conditions, school reform, and a trend toward increased academic

performance by all students (U.S. Department of Education, 1991).

Dealing with an ocean of issues requires knowledge of assessment and the use of assessment measures other than standardized tests (Cohen, Stern, & Balahan, 1983; Leavitt & Eheart, 1991; Wilson, 1987; Day, 1986). In the publication by the U. S. Department of Education, it is requested that measures be "appropriate" (p.71). Defining appropriate measures of assessment is an active on-going process.

A position paper generated by the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education (1991) states that, ". . . assessment is the process of observing, recording and otherwise documenting the work children do and how they do it" (p.21).

Smith and Shepard (1988) and Barry (1987) agree that teachers and paraprofessionals base decisions on what they believe rather than knowledge about child development or direct observations. Smith and Shepard define beliefs to be "like emotional attitudes" that one can have without even being fully cognizant. They believe, "Knowledge is based on conclusive facts and truths" (p. 309).

The early childhood teacher has been faced with an increasing amount of accountability. Historically, there have been only a few courses available during teacher training providing for knowledge of early childhood development or childrens' learning styles. Few courses were provided or required in the development of observation skills and techniques. Teachers did not have the opportunity to gain confidence in the use of observations as a method of assessment or evaluation. Faced with new forms of assessment based on observations, without information and skill development, the early childhood teacher was at a loss to know that observations were a valid form of evaluation.

Chapter III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals

The following goals and expected outcomes were projected: (a) the instructional staff would recognize six forms of observation techniques, (b) the instructional staff would implement two forms of observation techniques, (c) the instructional staff would indicate that they feel confident in the use of at least two techniques, (d) the instructional staff would make inferences from their observations and implement at least one change to their program or classroom.

Expected Outcomes

At the completion of implementation, all the instructional staff would indicate that they have knowledge of six types of observations. They would be asked to respond to a pre/post questionnaire to ascertain knowledge of the techniques. The selected techniques included the checklist, event sample, time sample, running record, anecdotal record and informal interview.

The staff would be able to implement two forms of observations. They would write an informal description of how they would accommodate the learning they have gained from the observations in the classroom. They would make at least one change to their program based on the observation and evaluate that change.

Five of the seven certified staff would write a report indicating the inference they made from the observations, implementation of some form of change in their classroom and an evaluation of that change. They would reflect on their experience of doing observations.

At the completion of implementation there would be an increase in the number of instructional staff indicating confidence in their ability to do observations. The instructional staff would recognize six types of observations and utilize observation techniques in the classroom. Five of the certified staff would make at least one change in their classroom and evaluate that change in a written report.

Measurement of Outcomes

The data regarding the knowledge of observation techniques prior to implementation and concluding the in-service were to be collected with the use of a Pre/Post

Questionnaire. This questionnaire provided a base of information from which to see a gain in knowledge of observation techniques.

A survey indicating the type of observation experienced and the feelings while doing the observations was used. This survey also asked for a rating of the experience on a Likert scale and a question regarding changes one might make the next time this particular technique was used (see Appendix B).

A change occurred during implementation that necessitated the development of another instrument. This instrument was designed to assist the instructional staff to reflect on the use of observations and to record changes they would make after the in-services (see Appendix C). This was the second most useful tool. The first tool was the Pre/Post Questionnaire. The Observation Survey was less helpful in describing a gain in confidence. The reportings of the feeling of conspicuous does not appear to relate to other adjectives. A reported feeling of conspicuous does not seem to relate to the reporting of apprehension, insecurity or being uncomfortable or frustrated.

Chapter IV

Solution Strategy

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

Early childhood education teachers needed skills in observing and recording the behavior of children. The teachers needed confidence in their ability to select and use observation techniques in their classrooms.

A number of solution strategies have been identified in the literature. Complex methods of assessment via preplanned observations are suggested by behavior analysts and educators. Barton and Ascione (1984) suggest a process of using an observer and a "reliability observer" (p.181). Others suggest that using an individual trained to do particular types of observations yields valid information about behavior (Turner, Nielson, & Murray, 1983; Henerson, Morris, & Fitz-Gibbon, 1981; Barton & Ascione, 1984; Gelfand & Hartman, 1975; Evertson & Green, 1986).

The North York Board of Education in Canada (1983) suggested that children do self-reporting. Advanced forms of self-reporting are offered as student accountability by Katz and Chard (1990). Informal interviews, journal writing and reflections by students

add to the direct observations by teachers (Phinney, 1982; Almay & Genishi, 1979; Heck & Williams, 1984; Caine & Caine, 1991).

Video taping of behavior as a means to aid in the observing of children is proposed by Boehm and Weinberg (1987) and the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation (1979). Both suggest that because actions can be frozen in time, the actions can be scrutinized and reviewed carefully time and time again.

Formalized training in observation techniques is suggested as part of teacher training by Cartwright and Cartwright (1974). Boehm and Weinburg (1987) suggest that the training include practice observations and follow-up discussions as part of the learning experience.

The writer worked with teachers in a public school setting. The teaches were employed full time at a location that is thirty minutes from the nearest university or location offering in-service training.

Formalized observations using an observer and a "reliability observer" as suggested by Barton and Ascione (1987) or an external observer would defeat the purpose of having the teachers learn to use observation techniques. Having others do the observations would not encourage the development of skill or confidence. The teachers were required to use observations themselves and

write narratives based on their observations as well as accumulated portfolio material. While outsiders could provide for the validity of the observational data, in all probability the information gathered would have been either too costly for the school district or have limited useful information for the teacher to use in the assessment process.

Self-reporting by children would have added an interesting perspective to the assessment, but it would have been biased. Depending on the situation, generally it would provide information in one or two developmental areas. The possibilities for the teacher to observe and record behaviors of social, emotional, creative, physical, language, and cognitive development were greater than in self-reporting situations. Self-reporting would have been a fascinating way to gather information and understanding about students, but it would be only one part of the observation process.

The potential for the use of media was exciting. The writer attempted to obtain a classroom video to assist in instruction of observation skills. A public school preschool teacher agreed to video a learning center. The children were accustomed to having a video camera in their classroom. The learning center was set up for forty-five minutes with five children interacting

consistently. When the teacher and the writer previewed the video, they agreed it would produce about five minutes of training tape to be used with teachers. This was not sufficient material to be used for training.

The writer previewed a sixteen minute videotape from the University of Minnesota (1988). The writer had a resource teacher preview the tape and offer an opinion. The writer and the resource teacher noted that even this training tape, purchased at significant cost, does not have certain observable elements in it. This videotape would probably best be used in conjunction with other resources.

Another solution offered was having formalized training and guided observations but those were not available to the classroom teacher. There were no courses being offered at local community colleges, private colleges, or universities. A pilot class had been offered in the fall of 1991, but it was limited to teachers from schools that had chosen to use their K-3 funds to purchase the class instead of other items offered on the K-3 menu of options in the spring of 1991.

Distance provides a major deterrent for the elementary teachers wishing in-service training. They would need to drive for half an hour after working a full day to attend one or two hours of class. There was no

release time offered for in-service classes offered during the day. The district budget restricted in-service training for teachers when substitute teachers had to be paid to take over the classrooms.

Description of Selected Solutions

Harcourt (1988) suggests that observations by teachers are a primary assessment tool for early childhood teachers. Dodge (1988) shares that "first and foremost teachers must be careful observers" (p.25). The National Association for the Education of Young Children (Bredekamp, 1987) recommends observations as appropriate assessment for the early childhood classroom. Johnson and Johnson (1987) and Barton and Ascione (1984) advise that observations should be part of the assessment process regardless of the subject taught or the grade level.

An initiation of training to do observations was begun in the nineteenth century. Parallel development of techniques and training in doing observations by researchers and educators coexisted from the 1940's and into the 1960's. Educators and behavior analysts sought to better understand the behavior of the developing human. Training in the use of observation techniques

continued for researchers, but teacher training institutions did not continue the practice with zest (Cohen, Stern, & Balahan, 1983).

There has been a resurgence in doing naturalistic observations. Emphasis on assessment based on the whole child, rather than on information gleaned from standardized tests, is strongly urged by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. If early childhood educators, including teachers of children in the primary grades in the public school system are to embrace developmentally appropriate practices in regard to curriculum and assessment, then training and skill development in observation techniques is imperative.

Smilansky and Shefatya (1990) strongly urge in-service training for teachers in the area of socio-dramatic play. As a part of that training, there is to be inclusion of "...acquaintanceship with different observation and evaluation methods" (p.233). Detailed information on how to observe and how to record observations is also offered by Smilansky and Shefatya.

Boehm and Weinburg (1987), in the preface of The Classroom Observer: Developing Observation Skills in early Childhood Settings, say that the experience they have had working with educators clearly shows a need for methodical development of observation skills and

techniques. In-service training is one of the recommendations they have for providing an opportunity for teachers to gain empirical knowledge and hands on practice.

Lamme and Hysmith (1991) discuss the issues related to teachers not knowing what "to observe or what to record" (p.634). Yet they found that teachers felt observational information they gathered to be valuable. They present a strong argument for observations by teachers while at the same time presenting a need for training and practice in observation records.

Henerson, Morris, and Fitz-Gibbon (1981) stress the need for training for observers. Although they do not specifically indicate teacher training, their emphasis is definitely on training in observing and defining behavior.

Phinney (1982) recommends experience and training to become a skilled observer. Her emphasis is on both experience (practice) and training. The High/Scope Research Foundation (1979) recommends training and gives examples of how to provide for the skill development. They strongly recommend in-service training. Practice and training are best provided through the in-service model while teaching in the primary classroom.

By connecting the opportunity to learn more about observation skills with the classroom teacher, the writer became a resource teacher for the teachers at an elementary school. The writer provided five sessions of in-service training to the staff in the full day kindergarten program. The training consisted of five class sessions designed to assist the staff in developing their skills in the techniques of observations. The goal was for the teachers to receive training and to develop self-confidence in their ability to observe and record the work of children recognizing observations as a valid form of assessment. The training was provided at the elementary school on a day that the children went home early in the afternoon. Textbooks and guided reading were provided to all certified, full day kindergarten teachers. Provision of the textbooks and the readings provided a common base of understanding about observation techniques.

The expectations were that the teachers would develop one format for recording observations meaningful to them. Teachers would use these new or increased skills to gain information to use with the Early Childhood Excellence model. Increasing the knowledge base and having an opportunity to practice the skills

teachers were developing would enhance the confidence level of the teachers.

Report of Action Taken

A meeting was held with the Director of CORE Studies, a K-3 resource teacher, and the writer. The Classroom Observer: Developing Observations Skills in Early Childhood Settings was chosen as the text for the in-services.

The Director of CORE Studies, the principal, a K-3 resource teacher and the writer mutually agreed on meeting dates for the series of five in-services. It was during this time that a major change in the plans occurred. The four people involved decided that the in-service would include all the teachers at the K-2 school, the teaching assistants, and other staff such as the librarian, Reading Recovery teacher, and the teacher of the pre-school handicapped program.

It was thought that by including everyone in the in-service, intergrade level communication would be enhanced among the staff. The staff numbered around thirty people. The four people involved hoped that distinguishing lines would be erased between different grade levels as the staff worked together on common issues.

The book was ordered from the publishers and paid for from grant monies. Requests to use copyrighted material were sent immediately, if the permission to use the material hadn't been already granted during the pilot classes (see Appendix D). Support staff was asked to prepare folders and materials for the first in-service. A sign in sheet was readied to record attendance. Lesson plans had been prepared earlier (see Appendices E, F, G, H, and I). The writer prepared an annotated bibliography of books about observation techniques (see Appendix J).

A paper listing the six observation techniques was prepared, leaving a paragraph of space between each technique for the instructional staff to define and give example of techniques during the first in-service. The first assignment was prepared (see Appendix K). The support staff prepared a calendar of future in-services.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children allows for reprints of articles to be used for educational purposes. The support staff prepared copies of the articles by Phinney (1982), and Leavitt and Eheart (1991) as well as a copy of the position statement of the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education (1991) for

the first meeting. The staff received a form to guide in the reading of the articles (see Appendix L).

The first in-service was held at the school in a kindergarten classroom. The teachers and staff received the folders that had been prepared by the support staff. They also received articles, prepared material and a Pre/Post Questionnaire. They answered the questionnaire and returned it before the introductory session on the six observation techniques.

The focus, however, for the first in-service was the technique called the checklist, the checklist being assumed to be the one that is most familiar to early childhood teachers.

An evaluation by the K-3 resource teacher and the writer determined a need for more comfortable space with room to write for future in-services. A need was expressed that the Director of CORE Studies should emphasize again how observations were a part of developmentally appropriate practice. The resource teacher placed two copies of the book by the North York Board of Education (1983) and two copies of Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children From Birth Through Age 8 (1991) in the school library for the teachers to use between in-services.

A week later the writer returned to the school to deliver the textbooks. The first teacher encountered indicated teachers were disconcerted about being asked to do assignments. Later that same day another teacher spoke to the writer as though she was the spokesperson for the group and asked the writer why the staff was expected to do assignments when the in-service was not being given for college credit.

An additional meeting was held with the Director of CORE Studies, the K-3 resource teacher and the writer to discuss the credit and logistical concerns. It was decided that assignments would still be required. The writer suggested a less intrusive approach. The assignments would be called Helpful Hints supporting the focus of the in-service and providing guidance for learning (see Appendix L).

The second in-service was held in a room much larger and conducive to group gathering. There were five large tables providing seating and writing room for thirty people. The Director of CORE Studies attended as did a K-3 resource teacher and the principal.

The staff shared a variety of checklists that they had chosen to try during the two week interval. Animated discussion followed regarding the use of checklists.

Explanations were given regarding the increment college credit situation. There was to be no college credit for this particular in-service. Staff had agreed when being interviewed for this new school that they would participate in in-service training regarding all aspects of developmentally appropriate practice. The writer shared the reduced assignment sheet called Helpful Hints.

The event sample technique was the focus of discussion at the second in-service. Staff chose two events to record and to share. The group discussed the difference between a time sample and an event sample. The writer shared the diagram used by Gelfand and Hartman (1975) as a suggested way to record time samples. The staff filled out and returned the Observation Survey.

The third session was held two weeks later. The focus was on the experiences related to event samples. After a review of the technique, four teachers shared verbally the event samples they had recorded. Five of the teaching assistants shared what they considered to be event samples. It appeared there was some confusion between event sample and anecdotal record. Discussion followed to support clarity between event sample and the anecdotal record.

The Observation Survey was distributed and collected. The expectation for the following in-service was to record event samples again. The writer had developed an additional form. The Fine Art of Observation was distributed to aid in the recording of observations (see Appendix N).

Time was allotted for discussion. The discussion at this in-service focused on the "how" of doing observations, recording equipment, supplies and ideas about filing the records and keeping track of the gathered material. During this in-service the writer distributed a handout from an early childhood education resource book (Harcourt, 1988). The handout shares a variety of recording techniques. Request to reprint had been received by CORE Studies.

Between session three and four, an educational consultant was invited to spend two days at the school. The consultant visited the classrooms, held grade level meetings and then held an after school in-service for all the staff. The focus was on developmentally appropriate practice, curriculum and assessment.

The Director of CORE Studies, the principal, a K-3 resource teacher and the writer met with the consultant after the large group in-service to discuss school climate. They also discussed how best to complete the

series of observation techniques in-services. It was decided to discontinue the after school, large group in-services.

Substitute teachers were hired so that teachers could be released to meet with the writer for an hour during the week. The teachers met in grade level groups for the last two sessions. The kindergarten level had seven teachers.

The K-3 resource teacher and the writer met one more time to arrange a schedule. The schedule went to the teachers and was posted in the faculty lounge. The assignment was prepared and the writer's phone number was added to the sheet in case anyone had a question about doing event samples or any other type of observation. The teachers had begun to ask questions about how to actually write up an observation to use in narratives or portfolios. The writer prepared a summary sheet to guide the reporting of the observed behavior (see Appendix O).

Session four was done in small groups. Teachers reported and shared their experiences with the event samples. They began to report changes they were making to support and accommodate observations. The majority indicated they needed to provide more time for themselves to observe and record observations. They were given a choice to do an anecdotal record for the next session or

an informal interview. The kindergarten teachers all chose to do anecdotal records. The Observation Survey was distributed, filled out and collected.

Session five was held close to the end of the school year. The teachers met in small groups to discuss the anecdotal records. The kindergarten teachers had chosen anecdotal records because they indicated that it closely related to the Early Childhood Excellence model. They each needed to submit five narratives based on the model to the principal for assessment purposes. The writer reviewed anecdotal records, talked about inferences, and discussed changes to the schedule, environment, and curriculum based on observations.

Session five was the last class session. Sharing was enthusiastic as one after another told of their success in doing the anecdotal record. Teachers completed and returned the Observation Survey, used the Reflections instrument and did a post questionnaire.

Chapter V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

Assessment procedures were being implemented that required teachers to do observations, record those observations, write narratives and share those narratives with their building principal, other educators, parents and the evaluator for Chapter I. The problem was that teachers had not been trained to observe and record the behavior of children as a form of assessment.

As a solution strategy the writer conducted in-service training at a school site on a day that children were released early. Literature suggests that training is necessary for the development of observation techniques. The results of pilot classes conducted by the writer further supported the importance of in-service training that provides both literature and observational experiences in establishing confidence in the use of these techniques as part of the assessment process.

Needs Assessment

The Pre/Post questionnaire was used as a needs assessment tool. The entire staff took the initial

questionnaire. It was not signed. The results of the questionnaire, using a Likert rating to measure confidence in the use of techniques, showed a staff unsure of the six observation techniques--anecdotal record, event sample, time sample, checklist, informal interview, and running record. Many of the respondents did not check their level of confidence, and these non-respondents were assigned a score of 3 indicating an "undecided" response (see Table 1).

Table 1

Results of Pre/Post Questionnaire Prior to In-services

Technique	Experience Y	Experience N	Average Confidence Rating	Training Needs Y	Training Needs N
Anecdotal record	15	12	3.53	22	2
Running record	14	13	3.14	21	5
Time sample	05	20	2.75	26	0
Event sample	04	21	2.71	24	1
Checklist	12	12	3.14	16	7
Informal interview	16	10	3.21	21	4

Note. Questionnaire administered to 28 staff.

In-service Outcomes

An expected outcome of the in-services was that the teachers would have knowledge of the six types of observation techniques. The teachers recognized each technique, indicating whether they had experience with the individual techniques (see Table 2).

Table 2

Results of Pre/Post Questionnaire Given Following In-service

Technique	Experience		Average Confidence Rating	Training Needs	
	Y	N		Y	N
Anecdotal record	7	0	4.43	1	4
Running record	3	1	3.57	4	3
Time sample	4	2	3.29	2	3
Event sample	7	0	4.00	0	4
Checklist	7	0	4.86	0	4
Informal interview	3	2	3.29	4	2

Note. Questionnaire administered to seven kindergarten teachers.

Outcomes of Observations

A second outcome of the implementation was that teachers would implement two forms of observations. In fact, they implemented three forms of observations--checklist, event sample, and anecdotal record.

The third expected outcome was that staff would make at least one change to their program and would evaluate that change. Each teacher reported that they would make one or more changes based on their observations. These changes were in the areas of curriculum, environment, and scheduling. (They did not have enough time to evaluate the change.) (see Table 3).

Table 3

Types of Changes Planned

	Curriculum	Environment	Schedule
Teachers	5	6	2

Note. Some teachers planned more than one change.

It was expected that teachers would feel self-confident in the use of two forms of observation techniques as a result of practice with the use of the techniques. Three techniques were implemented.

The checklist was implemented once, the event sample twice, and anecdotal record was implemented once. Teachers reported feeling prepared, comfortable, confident in the use of the checklist. None reported feeling apprehensive, uncomfortable or frustrated while using this tool.

Anecdotal record responses showed essentially the same pattern as did the checklist. The teachers reported feeling adequately prepared, comfortable and confident. They did not report feeling apprehensive, uncomfortable or insecure.

The event sample technique was implemented twice. Feelings of being adequately prepared, comfortable, and confident rose between the first implementation and the second. Feelings of apprehension, insecurity, frustration,

and being uncomfortable decreased between the first and second implementation. The opportunity to have practice and feedback appears to increase a confidence level while implementing observation techniques.

The feeling of being conspicuous basically remained the same. It seems to be an ambiguous term and not relevant to the other levels of feelings.

The staff indicated that they felt adequately prepared, comfortable and confident in the use of three forms of observations (see Table 4).

Table 4

Expression of Feelings While Doing Observations

	Check list		Event Sample 1		Event Sample 2		Anecdotal Record	
	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
Adequately prepared	6	1	2	5	5	1	7	0
Comfortable	7	0	3	4	6	0	7	0
Confident	6	1	2	5	6	0	7	0
Apprehensive	0	7	3	4	1	5	0	7
Insecure	0	7	1	6	1	5	0	7
Uncomfortable	0	7	2	5	0	6	0	7
Conspicuous	4	3	2	5	0	6	2	5
Frustrated	0	7	6	1	2	4	0	7
Confidence level	4.57		3.14		4.00		4.71	

Note. Six respondents for event sample 2.

Confidence in Implemented Techniques

Initially there was a detailed discussion of six techniques: anecdotal record, checklist, event sample, running record, time sample, and informal interview. The

implementation focused on three techniques; checklist, event sample, and anecdotal record. Teachers reported a higher level of confidence in those techniques (see Table 5).

Focus on two event samples shows the teachers made a shift to becoming more comfortable, confident and feeling adequately prepared. The teachers reported feeling less apprehensive, insecure, uncomfortable, and frustrated. The term conspicuous seemed ambiguous.

Table 5

Confidence in Implemented Techniques Versus Non-implemented Techniques

	Average Confidence Level
Anecdotal record	4.71
Running record	3.67
Time sample	3.28
Event sample	4.00
Checklist	4.57
Informal interview	3.28

Discussion

The expected outcomes were met and exceeded in most cases. However, these outcomes might not have been met if the group had stayed as large and diverse as it had been in the beginning. The in-services seemed more effective when they were offered to small groups of teachers at a homogenous grade level.

Attention specific to the classrooms provided support to the teachers' attempts to use the various observation

techniques. Support provided by their grade level peers seemed to strengthen teachers' confidence.

The writer, who was at the school, to provide Child Development Associate training for the teaching assistants, assumed the role of facilitator and resource person. Teachers presented questions to the writer in the hallways and in the teachers' lounge regarding the implementation of observation techniques. At times the teachers invited the writer into the classroom to make suggestions as to the type of technique to be used to gain specific information. They asked for additional resource information regarding recording tools and references.

The event sample technique was implemented twice. The original plan provided for that second experience. This experience increased kindergarten teachers' confidence rating from a 3.14 to a 4.00 over the course of the two uses.

Provisions for gaining additional experience appear to be worthwhile. Following the first event sample only one teacher planned a change, setting time aside to do observations without interruptions. The remaining teachers indicated a sense of frustration and confusion. After the second experience, the sense of frustration had diminished. Five teachers planned to change their class schedules in order to accommodate more observations.

The anecdotal record was the final technique experienced during the in-service. Discussion time in small groups allowed for clarity of the technique prior to practice. On the basis of a confidence scale of 1-5, the teacher rating after the anecdotal record was a 4.71.

The changes the teachers indicated they would make after experiencing the anecdotal record technique were focused on the needs of children. Six of the teachers indicated changes involving direct experiences with the child. These direct experiences included providing time for play and socio-dramatic activities, cooperative problem solving, additional manipulatives and story board activities, using learning strategies and techniques to accommodate a variety of learning styles, and opportunities for positive interactions between English and Spanish speaking children.

Teachers reported focusing on children as individuals. Focusing on children's needs was evident in teachers' reports concerning the changes they would make based on their observations. They indicated that they would make changes to curriculum and environment which directly impact individual children. They referenced learning styles, behavior, open ended activities, self-reporting and child choice. All of these are evidence of teachers' thoughtful

reflections based on observations. Teachers reported these ideas during the final in-service meeting.

In addition, teachers became resources to their peers and to the writer. One of the teachers shared an article with the writer published just prior to implementation. The article by Rhodes and Nathenson-Meja (1992) focuses on observation as an important tool in literacy assessment. A second teacher mentioned in the reflection process that while she had always been an observer of children, she now had gained more knowledge by recording her observations. Another teacher indicated that she had more knowledge of what to look for in observations and had developed analysis skills.

The writer had assumed that most certified teachers had been trained in observation skills and that they would be reluctant but confident in recording and writing narratives of observations. It was surprising to learn that colleges and staff development had seldom included observational techniques in the teacher training curriculum.

The writer found, contrary to expectation, that teachers were eager to learn observation techniques. Some were a bit reluctant to try the different techniques, but as they became more at ease with the language of observations and the skills needed to do particular observations, they became active participants.

The emphasis on early childhood education, the research on learning techniques, and the language of developmentally appropriate practice suggest that observation techniques are a competency required of a person working in an educational setting. Although this report does not detail the in-services provided for the instructional staff in the first and second grades, those in fact took place simultaneously. An upper level teacher indicated that she had changed her entire classroom to provide for the use of observations. Another upper level teacher reported to the large group meeting that she was incorporating self-reporting and informal interviews as part of the daily schedule. She wanted to make sure that she had made contact with each student. She reported surprising changes that came from the curriculum change.

Enough emphasis can hardly be placed on the use of observations in the classroom. Unless time is taken to know the students in ways that standardized tests do not reflect, the child will be just another body in the classroom. Positive experiences flowed from the series of in-services for both the teachers and the students.

Recommendations

There are several recommendations that the writer would make regarding in-service training to provide for the knowledge of and guided experiences of observation techniques. Observation skills take on new significance as early childhood educators move in the direction of developmentally appropriate practice, curriculum and assessment. Appropriate training needs to be provided for teachers already in the classroom.

1. A needs assessment should be conducted prior to implementation. Some schools may have a staff that is experienced in doing observation techniques or in particular techniques. The needs assessment needs to be done on location.

2. The group should be kept small enough to accommodate easy communication and exchange of ideas.

3. A minimum of two weeks should elapse between the in-service meetings. This allows the participants to implement and reflect on the techniques.

4. Opportunities to repeat the techniques needs to be provided for individuals who need more time. Experience and exposure to a variety of observation techniques provides a basis for confidence in the use of the techniques.

5. The use of an assessment or evaluation tool after each experience of an observation technique provides for staff development that is meaningful to the participants. Review of this evaluation will provide an opportunity to adjust or enrich the next experience.

6. Presentation to a group should accommodate various learning styles. Providing resources, reading materials, case studies, and personal experiences provides a solid knowledge base.

7. On-site training is helpful for the teachers. They can plan changes based on their observations and can implement the change and evaluate the change.

8. Providing college credit for in-service training needs to be explored with local schools of higher education.

The writer will continue to encourage the provision of in-services in the use of observation techniques. The writer will support the efforts of teachers in doing observations and in the gaining of additional skills in the area of observation techniques, recording and reporting of the findings of the recordings.

Dissemination

The writer plans to share this report with the Director of Staff Development. The writer intends to share this report with the Program Manager for Child Development Associate training program at a community college. The report will be shared with the Director of CORE Studies and the K-3 resource teacher as well as the central staff in the early childhood component of the Chapter 1 Program.

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APPENDIX A

PRE/POST OBSERVATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Pre - Post **OBSERVATION** Questionnaire

This is a list of observational techniques. Have you had experience in these techniques?

	Yes	No
Anecdotal record	___	___
Time Sampling	___	___
Event Sampling	___	___
Checklist	___	___
Informal Interview	___	___

I feel confident in my ability to use these observation techniques.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
SA	A	U	D	SD
___	___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___	___

Please specify training you have had using observational techniques.

Undergraduate ___

Graduate ___

Staff Development ___

Other_____

Would you like more training to increase your level of expertise in these techniques?

	Yes	No
Anecdotal Records	___	___
Time Sampling	___	___
Event Sampling	___	___
Checklist	___	___
Informal Interview	___	___

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APPENDIX B

OBSERVATIONS SURVEY

Observations Survey

Name_____

School_____ Date_____

Personal checklist

Type of observation Check One

_____ anecdotal records _____time sample
_____ checklist _____informal interview
_____ event sample _____ running record

While observing, how did you feel? Answer Yes or No

_____ adequately prepared _____ confident
_____ insecure _____ frustrated
_____ apprehensive _____ conspicuous
_____ comfortable _____ uncomfortable

Rate the experience by circling the number relevant to your feelings.

1	2	3	4	5
Meaningless		Undecided	Very	Meaningful

How would you do things differently the next time you use this type of observation?

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APPENDIX C

REFLECTIONS INSTRUMENT

Reflections on Using Observations in the Classroom

Name_____ School_____

1. What inference or inferences did you draw from your classroom observations?

2. What changes did you make based on your classroom observations? (curriculum, environment, schedule)

3. How do you plan to evaluate those changes?

4. How will you use the techniques about observations you have learned in the classroom?

5. Which of the techniques we discussed did you find the most helpful in understanding children? (checklist, event sample, anecdotal record, informal interview)

APPENDIX D

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Rebecca R. Montano

Rebecca R. Montano
Executive Director
CORE Studies K-12

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APPENDIX E

LESSON PLAN 1

Observation Skills

Lesson Plan Outline 1

I. Introductions
   A. Pretest - Observation Questionnaire
   B. 5 minute classroom observation--unguided
   C. Effective observations
   D. Reasons for doing observations

II. Course content
   A. Definitions of observations--informal--formal
   B. Role of the observer
   C. Definitions of six types of observations
      1. Checklist
      2. Event sample
      3. Time sample
      4. Running record
      5. Anecdotal record
      6. Informal interview
   D. Alternate terms
   E. What observations are and what they are not
   F. Opportunities to observe

III. Annotated bibliography -- additional reading

IV. Assignment
   A. Read -- text
   B. Guidelines for appropriate curriculum content and assessment in programs serving children 3 through 8 NAEYC
   C. Develop and implement your own checklist
   D. Write (reflect) a report in response to each to these questions
      1. What are you trying to gain information about
         a. social development
         b. cognitive development
         c. motor development
         d. language development
         e. emotional development
         f. creative development
      2. How many items do you wish to include?
      3. What inferences can be made from what is learned?
      4. What changes can be/will be made based on the observations?
      5. Will you make a program change based on the observations?
   E. Conference with me if you have any questions or concerns
   F. Bring a clean copy of your checklist to class next time along with questions and good news to share

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APPENDIX F

LESSON PLAN 2

Observation Skills

Lesson Plan Outline 2

I. Reconvene
   A. Welcome--expectations for today's class
   B. Energizer--My favorites
   C. Topics
      1. Discussion of observer bias in observation techniques
         a. anecdotal records
         b. event samples
         c. time sample
         d. informal interview
      2. Language of observations

II. Verbal and visual sharing
   A. Checklist--designed by teachers
   B. Observation survey--on checklist--collect
   C. Round table discussion
   D. Sharing of checklists designed by others
   E. Confidentiality issue

III. Skill development--event sample
   A. Types of events appropriate for recording
   B. Early Childhood Excellence--assessment
   C. Record keeping--handout--if permission is granted
   D. Discussion of child kept event sample--self-reporting
   E. Answer, How can the event sample be useful in classroom?--specifically
   F. Design recording device for event sample

IV. Assignment
   A. Bring an unused copy of your personally designed event sample to class to share
   B. Write (reflect) a report to respond to these questions
      1. Why did you chose this particular event?
      2. What information have you gained from your recording?
      3. What inferences can you draw from what you have learned?
      4. What program changes can you make to eliminate or enhance this event?
      5. Why would you want to eliminate or enhance the event?
   C. Conference with in-service advisor if you need support or have questions
   D. Video -- Looking at Young Children -- Center for Early Education and Development -- University of Minnesota

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APPENDIX G

LESSON PLAN 3

Observation Skills

Lesson Plan Outline 3

I. Reconvene
   A. Welcome
   B. Energizer--text--p.4
   C. Share "Listen to the children" by Mary Koepke

II. Sharing
   A. Discussion of events sampled
   B. Observation survey--event sample
   C. Discussion
      1. Focus of event sampling and reason for selection
      2. How would you strengthen the process or do it differently
      3. How does it relate to Early Childhood Excellence assessment

III. Process model--observe, infer, implement, evaluate implementation

IV. Enhanced skill development--continue event sample
   A. Early Childhood Excellence assessment model as event(s) sample
   B. Procedures--to maximize understanding about the children in your care
   C. Uses for event sample--in no specific order
      1. Documentation
      2. Portfolio entry
      3. Early childhood assessment
      4. Sharing with parent and child
      5. Program evaluation

V. Assignment
   A. Continue to practice event sample
      1. Event(s) of your choice
      2. Use Early Childhood Excellence model
   B. Plan to implement one program change
   C. Determine how that program change will be evaluated
   D. Write a narrative of your process and progress to include event sampled, plan for program change and method of evaluation of that program change

APPENDIX H

LESSON PLAN 4

Observation Skills
Lesson Plan Outline 4

I. Reconvene
   A. Welcome
   B. Energizer--Quotations to live by
   C. Observation survey--collect
   D. Discussion of enhance emphasis on event sample

II. Sharing
   A. Pros and cons of observation techniques
   B. Fine art of observation
      1. Focus
      2. Objectivity
      3. Methods
      4. Information relativity
      5. Collecting
      6. Sharing
   C. Handouts
      1. Observing children: Ideas for teachers--Phinney
      2. Assessment in early childhood programs--Leavitt and Eheart
   D. Skill development--anecdotal record
      1. Share Facilitating play--Smilansky and Shefatya
      2. Share Observing and Recording the behavior of young children--Cohen and Stern
      3. Discussion
      4. Components of an anecdotal record
         a. context--scenario
         b. actions
         c. Diagram -- sharing ideas from Child Behavior -- Gelfand and Hartman
            1) antecedent event
            2) response
            3) consequent social event

III. Assignment
   A. Record at least two or more anecdotal records on three different children
   B. Diagram according to Gelfand and Hartman
   C. Draw inferences, plan, implement a change in program
   D. Keep a journal of this experience to be shared with in-service advisor
   E. Bring journal to class

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APPENDIX I

LESSON PLAN 5

Observation Skills

Lesson Plan Outline 5

I. Reconvene
   A. Welcome
   B. Energizer
   C. Observation survey

II. Sharing
   A. Discussion of anecdotal records as a method of recording observations
   B. Review of charting designed by Gelfand and Hartman as used by classroom teacher
   C. Teacher experiences with techniques
      1. Increased emphasis on observations
      2. Observations as tool for assessment
      3. Program changes due to observations
   D. Questions and answers regarding observation techniques

III. Post test

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APPENDIX J

ASSIGNMENT

Observation Skills

ASSIGNMENT

A. Read.

1. Observing Children: Ideas for Teachers Jean Phinney. Young Children, July 1982.

2. Assessment in Early Childhood Programs Robin Lynn Leavitt and Brenda Krause Eheart, Young Children, July 1991

3. Guidelines for Appropriate Curriculum Content and Assessment in Programs Serving Children Ages 3 Through 8, Young Children, March 1991.

B. Develop and implement your own checklist.

C. Write (reflect) a report in response to these questions.

1. What are you trying to gain information about?
   a. social development
   b. cognitive development
   c. motor development
   d. language development
   e. emotional development
   f. creative development

2. How many items do you wish to include?

3. What inferences can be made from what is learned?

4. What changes can be/will be made based on the observations?

5. Will you make a program change based on the observations?

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APPENDIX K

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Annotated Bibliography

Almay, M. & Genishi, C. (1979). Ways of studying children. New York: Teachers College Press. Describes observations as the basic way to study children, makes suggestions on when to observe. A resource and reference for people that shows that development and learning are interlinked.

Boehm, A. E., & Weinberg, R. A. (1987). The classroom observer: Developing observation skills in early childhood setting. New York: Teachers College Press. Systematic approach to classroom observations in early and middle childhood. References available for commercial formats. Up to date manual with a reference source as well as a bibliography.

Bentzen, W. R. (1985). Seeing young children: A guide to observing and recording behavior. Albany, NY: Delmar Publishers, Inc. Brief description of anecdotal records, tine and event sampling, checklist, etc. This book is relatively easy to read, has interesting information on "inferences".

Cohen, D. H., Stern, V, & Balahan, N. (1983). Observing and recording the behavior of young children (3rd ed.). New York: Teachers College Press. An excellent resource to understanding the role of the teacher in recording children's behavior. It provides helpful guides of what to listen for or to watch for in observing. For many years Cohen and Stern were considered "the authorities" in the observation of children. Very good final chapter on looking for patterns, written summaries and interpreting behavior.

Heck, S. F. & Williams, C. R. (1984). The complex roles of the teacher: An ecological perspective. New York: Teachers College Press.

Johnson, D. W. & Johnson, R. T. (1987) Learning together and alone (2nd ed). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall. Fun book on cooperative learning with guidelines for the teacher as the observer and the student as the observer. Strongly suggest for middle elementary and middle school teachers.

Smilansky, S. & Shefayta, L. (1990). Facilitating play: A medium for promoting cognitive,socio-emotional and academic development in young children. Gaithersburg, MD: Psychosocial & Educational Publications. Book presents theoretical and practical evidence that socio-dramatic play is crucial for development of the total child. "Smilansky Scale for Evaluation of Socio-dramatic Play for Children ages 3-8 is a valid and reliable tool for observation and diagnosis."

APPENDIX L

HELPFUL HINTS

Helpful hints for preparing for the next class session

A. Record at least two anecdotal records on three different children; write them up so they can be shared.

B. Draw inferences; plan and implement a change in program.

C. Keep an account (journal) of this experience to be shared.

D. Bring account to in-service to share experience with others or share with in-service advisor.

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APPENDIX M

GUIDED READING

KEY LEARNINGS FROM ASSIGNED ARTICLES

TITLE OF ARTICLE _____

_____

LEARNINGS

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

IMPLICATIONS FOR MY CLASSROOM _____

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APPENDIX N

FINE ART OF OBSERVATION

Fine Art of Observation
Skill Development

Are you careful and unobtrusive? (Cohen, Stern & Balahan, 1983)

Have you determined the aspect of behavior you intend to record?

Are your observations objective and as non-judgmental as possible?

Are you keeping supplies handy for recording incidents, events or anecdotes?

Review past observations. Are they focused in a particular area of cognitive, social, emotional, or physical development? Are there a variety of observations covering varying aspects of development?

Have you included relevant information such as date, time, reason, etc.?

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APPENDIX O

SUMMARY SHEET

THE SUMMARY

The information shared here is from Observing and Recording the Behavior of Young Children. This book by Dorothy Cohen and Virginia Stern was considered the end all of "how to do" books on observations. It is in its third edition and is now written with Nancy Ballahan.

As you prepare to pull together all the information you have so carefully recorded about the children (child), you will be writing a summary. Hopefully these shared hints will be of support.

TRENDS

What's happening now? What direction is the behavior going in? Has the concentration time increased? Has creativity increased? Has cooperation lessened or increased? What seems to be the TREND?

PROBLEMS

The road is not always smooth. Problems can be seen as hurdles, challenges; minor detours that can be roadblocks to a smooth route. These may or may not be indicated in the final summary.

Evaluating Growth

Trends and problems--if events have been recorded or records have been kept, we can see (have documentation) for reporting growth in the summary.

Prognosis

Perhaps here recommendations can be made for what we see as the best chance for continued growth. What have we noticed that will support the child as an active learner?

Extremes

"...extremes of behavior may mean real trouble or special talent, and should be noted."

The Whole Child

This is where you record the individuality of the child. What makes that child special to you as the child's teacher?

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